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to occur in its explanation. The Hebrew mind, in extracting a supernatural deity out of the natural deities of paganism, had necessarily to couple therewith the severest abstract idea of perfectibility. As a theological abstraction, this suited their mental love of harmony and unity, and had an all-engrossing influence upon their thoughts and feelings for a long time, and while held up in favorable contrast with the theological theories of their contemporaries. But when the intellectual intoxication of this belief had waned from their own increasing subjective and objective experiences—when they began to grow wiser from suffering, and more potent in their own thinking faculties, they soon emerged into the sad consciousness, that though the world was ruled by perfectibility, yet it was far from being perfect, and that themselves, though the chosen people of the Deity, and under his special protection, had innumerable tribulations, sorrowings, and sufferings to bear.

This doctrinal perplexity of the Hebrew mind has had a terrible effect upon the human mind generally, and has strained its faculties in trying to discover the inexplicable mystery of the coexistence in time and place of terrestrial suffering, and imperfection and celestial happiness and perfection. With the Deity above us we couple all the virtues within our comprehension, and at the same time the power on *his* part of making them descend upon the earth, and of becoming the inseparable associates of each living man. While doing this mentally, we see swarming around us every form of sin, of injustice, of inhumanity. We see the wicked triumph over the good, the unjust over the just, the crooked over the straightforward, and the lust of wealth over the chastity of poverty. Our moral sufferings and despair, like a poison trouble the texture of our tissues and the regularity of our functions, and our minds from the highest tension of unequivocal faith lapse into the blankest skepticism.

Now, it is out of this anomalous condition of man upon the earth, and upon the supposed relationship which he holds to an all-perfect Being, that the author of the Book of Job has constructed the grandest monument of Hebrew genius and one that has had and ever will have an everlasting echo in the human heart.

To clearly comprehend the Book of Job, says M. Renan, it is not sufficient to pay attention to its date; we must mentally link it to the race which has created it, and of which it is the most perfect expression. Nowhere do the dryness, the austerity, the grandeur which characterize the semitic race show themselves more pointedly. The fine and delicate touches which make of the great poetic creations of Greece and India so perfect an imitation of nature, are not a moment to be felt pervading this strange book. Whole phases of the human soul are wanting to it: a kind of majestic stiffness gives to the poem a cold aspect, and, as it were, an outline of brass. But the position, so eminently poetical, of man in this world—his mysterious struggle against an inimical force and invisible—his alternatives

equally justified of submission and revolt—have never inspired so eloquent a lamentation. The grandeur of human nature consists in a contradiction which has struck all the wise, and has been the fruitful source of all high thought and of all noble philosophy: on the one side, the conscience affirming right and duty as supreme realities; on the other, the facts of every day inflicting on these profound aspirations inexplicable contradiction. Hence, a sublime lamentation which has lasted since the origin of the world, and which, to the end of time, will bear toward heaven the protestation of moral man. The Book of Job is the most sublime expression of this cry of the soul. In it blasphemy borders on the hymn, or, rather, it is a hymn itself, since it is an appeal to God against the imperfections which the conscience finds in the works of God.

WAITING IN THE RAIN.

A LIGHT flashed up in her clear blue eye
Like a ray through a break in the cloudy sky,
As she leaned at the showered pane.
"Thank Heaven, he's come!"—but the train shrieked "Nay!"
And crashed o'er her dying hopes away.
Still she waited on, till the day was gone—
Waited alone in the rain.

Ever, now and again, the cloud-rack through
There peeped a bud of the heavenly blue—
Blue, without speck or stain.
Then the young corn shook in its jewelled mist,
And the violets twinkled like amethyst,
And her eye grew bright with a dewy light,
Waiting alone in the rain.

But the soft blue flower of the sky shut up
Behind the tempest its hollow cup;
The meadows were dim again;
And the warm light faded out of her eyes,
While she paced and gazed on the restless skies,
While she tried to keep her wild heart asleep,
Waiting alone in the rain.

It streamed and poured from the shelving bank;
It sprinkled mire on the sedges rank;
It beat on the springing grain.
"Come home!" called the horn from behind the hill.
She heard, but she waited and listened still,
Still, gazing back down the iron track,
Waited alone in the rain.

The hours dragged by; it was dark and late.
The cars rushed on with their throbbing freight,
Screaming a laugh at her pain.
But the west uncurtained a wide, clear space,
And the sunset lighted a laggard face,
And the wild, wet day stole in smiles away,
While two hurried home in the rain.

LUCY LARCOM.